Accessibility Plan

Date: January 2019   **Due for Review: January 2021**

1. The Law:

Introduction:

From September 2002, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA): Sections 28D and 28E outlawed discrimination by schools and LEAs against either current, or prospective, disabled pupils in their access to education. The new duties required of schools by this Act builds on, and complements, best inclusive practice. One of these duties is for schools to plan to increase, over time, the accessibility for disabled pupils. This plan does not require a separate planning process: a school can, for example, include its Accessibility Plan within the School Improvement Plan, and report its progress on accessibility planning within the SEN report.

Statutory Responsibilities:

The DDA, as amended by the SEN and Disability Act 2001, places a duty on all schools and LEAs to plan to increase, over time, the accessibility of school for disabled pupils and to implement those plans when the need arises.

The LEAs are required to prepare accessibility strategies covering the maintained schools in their area.

Each school is required to produce its own accessibility plan, and the plan must be in writing. The nature and content of the plan will depend on, and reflect, the size of the school and the resources available to it.

The planning duty came into force in September 2002 and, by April 2003, schools and LEAs were required to have in place their first written strategies and plans which are to be valid at least until March 2006. Schools and LEAs have a duty to review and revise their plans and strategies over this 3-year period.

Schools and LEAs are required to establish strategies and plans for:

- **increasing access for disabled pupils to the school curriculum**. This covers teaching and learning, and the wider curriculum of the school such as participation in after-school clubs, leisure and cultural activities, and school visits;

- **improving access to the physical environment of schools**. In addition to the physical environment this plan will also cover physical aids to access education;

- **improving the delivery of written information to disabled pupils**. This includes planning to make written information which is normally provided by a school to its pupils to also be made available to disabled pupils - but presented to them in a manner appropriate to their specific disability. Examples would be handouts, timetables, textbooks and information on school events that are presented in pupils' and parents' preferred formats and made available within a reasonable timeframe.

The Law (Continued):

Definition of Disability:
A person has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his of her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Publishing Plans and Strategies:
- Maintained schools have a duty to publish information on their Accessibility Plans in their Annual Report to parents.
- LEAs are required to make their strategies available for inspection to interested parties.

Monitoring Progress:

As part of their inspections, OFSTED will monitor the LEA's Accessibility Strategies and the schools' Accessibility Plans.

2. Accessibility Planning by Walton Oak School:

The Surrey Education Authority's DDA strategy requires its maintained schools to plan to take all reasonable steps to make provision for disabled pupils.

Throughout 2005 and 2006, working regularly with the SCC-appointed Architect responsible for the design of the new school building, the Headteacher, School Premises Manager and appointed governor ensured that all reasonable provision was made in the design and construction of the building and its surrounding games and play areas to allow safe access, use and passage by disabled pupils and adults.

Appropriate design features of the building include wheelchair access to all teaching, learning and recreational spaces; and consideration for the needs of disabled pupils and adults in the design of toilet cubicles and washrooms. In addition, care has been taken in the design of the "escape" and other types of information signage, and the emergency alarm and lighting systems, to consider the needs of disabled persons using the building.

Clearly the above "hardware" provisions are mainly beneficial to pupils and adults with physical disabilities. Pupils with mental disabilities will rely on personal interaction and carefully designed information presentation.

The Checklist on the following two pages is intended to assist in the identification of barriers that may be limiting disabled pupils' and adults' access to the School's learning and physical environment.

At the review date January 2019, it is felt that access for disabled pupils is very good:

- **The school has full access for pupils, parents and staff with physical disabilities, including disabled toilet facilities in every area of the school, designated parking and ramps throughout the premises.**

- **During pick up and drop off times, a member of staff mans the school gate and opens it and closes it for drivers.**

- **When pupils with disabilities are offered places to school, appropriate support is planned wherever possible before they join, in the form of additional staffing and any apparatus required to support the individual.**

- **Special arrangements are made to assist disabled pupils in accessing off site trips. Recent examples include an additional member of staff for a statemented pupil on a residential, a special harness and buggy for a four year old statemented pupil for a day trip and invitations to parents/carers of disabled pupils to accompany, where appropriate.**

- **The school has a strongly inclusive ethos.**

However, disabled visitors to the school during the school day continue to be compromised by being unable to open the school gates without leaving their vehicle.

The governors have discussed this issue on a number of occasions and are committed to seeking out a means of ensuring disabled drivers can enter the school premises during the day.

ACCESSIBILITY PLANNING BY WALTON OAK SCHOOL

IDENTIFYING BARRIERS TO ACCESS FOR DISABLED PUPILS

CHECKLIST

This checklist should help to identify barriers to access that exist in school. The list is not exhaustive: it is designed to encourage a flexible approach to the questioning of the accessibility of our school's teaching and physical environment.

Section 1. How does the school deliver the curriculum?

	YES	NO
do we ensure that teachers and teaching assistants have the necessary training to teach and support disabled pupils?	x	
are our classrooms organised to meet the need of disabled pupils?	x	
do lessons provide opportunities for all pupils to achieve?	x	
are lessons responsive to pupil diversity?	x	
do lessons involve work to be done by individuals, pairs, groups, and the whole class?	x	
are all pupils encouraged to take part in music, drama, and physical activities?	x	
can staff recognise and allow for the mental effort expended by some disabled pupils; for example, using lip-reading?	x	
can staff recognise and allow for the additional time required by some disabled pupils to use equipment in practical work?	x	
can staff provide alternative ways of giving access to experience or understanding for disabled pupils who cannot engage in particular activities; for example, some forms of exercise in physical education?	x	
can we provide access to computer technology appropriate for pupils with disabilities?	x	
can school visits, including overseas visits, be made accessible to all pupils irrespective of attainment or impairment? *Yes, with revisions*	x	
are there high expectations of all pupils?	x	
do staff seek to remove all barriers to learning and participation?	x	

Section 2. Is the school designed to meet the needs of all pupils?

	YES	NO
in the school building, does the size and layout of areas – including all academic, sporting, play, social facilities, classrooms, the assembly hall, canteen, library, gymnasium, and outdoor sporting facilities, playgrounds and common rooms – allow access for all pupils?	x	
in the school building, can pupils who use wheelchairs move around the school without experiencing barriers to access such as those caused by steps and stairs and some doorways, toilet facilities and showers?	x	
in the school building, are pathways of travel around the school site, and parking arrangements safe, routes logical, and well-signed?	x	

Section 2 (Continued):

	YES	NO
In the school building: • are emergency and evacuation systems employing auditory and visual components appropriate to inform ALL pupils including those with SEN and disability?	x	
• are any non-visual guides (e.g. tactile signs) used to assist pupils to safely navigate their way around the building?		x
• could any of the décor or signage be considered to be confusing or disorienting for disabled pupils with visual impairment, autism or epilepsy?		x
• are all areas to which pupils should have access well lit?	x	
• are arrangements made (such as considering rooms' acoustics, and appropriate treatment of noisy equipment) to reduce background noise for hearing-impaired pupils?	x	
• is furniture and equipment selected, adjusted and located appropriately?	x	

Section 3. Can the school deliver materials in other formats?

	YES	NO
can we provide information in simple language, symbols, large print, on audio-tape or in Braille for pupils, and prospective pupils, who may have difficulty with standard forms of printed information?	x	
can we ensure that information is presented to groups in a way which is user-friendly for people with disabilities (e.g. by reading aloud overhead text projections and describing diagrams)?	x	
do we have facilities such as ICT to produce written information in different formats?	x	
can we ensure that staff are familiar with technology and practices developed to assist pupils with disabilities?	x	